

Message Text

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71
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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R 251650Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6907
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY RONE
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6512

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: LABOR REFORM GOV'T DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION LABOR
COMMENCES

1. KICKING OFF WHAT WILL APPARENTLY BE A SERIES OF
INFORMAL DIALOGUES WITH OPPOSITION LABOR ELEMENTS
PRESENTLY STILL OUTSIDE THE LAW, SYNDICAL RELATIONS
MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA RECENTLY MET ALONE WITH THREE MEMBERS
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST UGT. THE
UNOFFICIAL MEETING WAS ARRANGED THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES
OF CIRIACO DE VICENTE ("CAMBIO 16" JOURNALIST AND UGT
MILITANT) WHO, INCIDENTALLY, IS A 1976 IVP GRANTEE
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SCHEDULED TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S. LATER THIS FALL.

THE UGT TERMED THE AUGUST 19 MEETING "CORDIAL AND PROPER" - A DIALOGUE, NOT A NEGOTIATING SESSION - AND CHARACTERIZED DE LA MATA'S INITIATIVE AS "POSITIVE".

2. ACCORDING TO UGT SOURCES, DE LA MATA HAD WISHED TO EXCHANGE IMPRESSIONS ON THE PRESENT TRADE UNION SITUATION AND THE EVOLUTAIION OF LABOR REFORM EFFORTS. ON ITS SIDE, THE UGT HAD STATED ITS POSITION ON LABOR AMNESTY, FREE TRADE UNIONISM, DISMANTLEMENT OF THE OFFICIAL SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO), COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, AND THE RETURN OF CONFISCATED UGT PROPERTIES.

3. BOTH TRADE UNION AND GOVT SOURCES HAVE TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT DE LA MATA WILL SHORTLY BE MEETING INFORMALLY WITH THE REMAINING TWO MAJOR OPPOSITION LABOR GROUPS (SOCIAL CHRISTAIN USO AND THE COMMUNIST -DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS - SWC), AND POSSIBLY WITH SUCH SMALLER LABOR GROUPS AS THE BASQUE STV AND THE CATALONIA-ORIENTED CNT AND SOC. MOST LABOR OBSERVERS PREDICT THAT THESE INFORMAL "DIALOGUES" WILL LEAD TO JOINT NEGOTIATIONS OF A MORE FORMAL NATURE, A KING OF TRADE UNION-GOVT ROUNDTABLE TO HAMMER OUT THE GROUD-RULES OF LABOR REFORM. IN THE MEANTIME, DE LA MATA IS TAKING HIS PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS TO MAKE SURE THAT HE IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND THAT HIS LABOR REFORM PROJECTS WILL NOT BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND.

4. COMMENT. OBVIOUSLY, THIS LABOR-GOVT DIALOGUE COMPLEMENTS THE GOVT-OPPOSITION DIALOGUE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, AND IS FURTHER RECOGNITION THAT SPANISH POLITICAL REFORM AND LABOR REFORM MUST GO HAND-IN-HAND. IT IS ALSO KNOWN THAT DE LA MATA IS WORRIED ABOUT CONTINUING PREDICTIONS OF A "HOT LABOR AUTUMN". IN THAT RESPECT, HE RECEIVED LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE UGT WHICH REPEATED ITS OPPOSITION TO ANY DEAL OR "SOCIAL PACT" A LA BRITISH TUC EXAMPLE (MADRID 6351). JUST AS THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN ENDEAVORING TO FORM A UNIFIED POSITION FOR ANY TALKS WITH THE GOVT ON POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL REFORMS LABOR IS ALREADY SERVING NOTICE

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THAT IT WILL ENDEAVOR TO PUT UP A UNIFIED FRONT ON LABOR REFORM. FROM WHAT USO TOLD US ON AUGUST 25, THIS COULD MEAN A STRONGER ROLE FOR THE COORDINADORA OBRERA SINDICAL (COS - THE NATIONAL "UNITY OF ACTION" MECHANISM GROUPING THE UGT, USO, AND SWC). ONE THING APPEARS CERTAIN: LABOR WILL MAKE THE DISMANTLEMENT OF THE OFFICIAL SSO A PRIMARY CONDITION FOR LABOR REFORM NEGOTIATIONS.

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